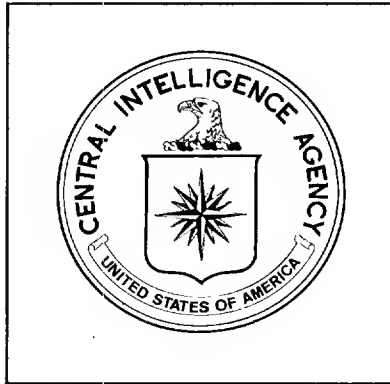


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Afghanistan

Daoud Whittling Down Leftist Influence

President Daoud continues gradually to reduce the influence of leftists in the Afghan government. In recent weeks, he has reportedly removed several high officials alleged to be left-wingers, including two provincial governors and the director-general of public health services. There is an unconfirmed report that the leftist commander of Daoud's palace guard has also been dismissed.

Afghan leftists, although relatively few in number, were given a significant role in the government after Daoud was restored to power two years ago in a coup led by left-wing military officers. Many of the leftist officials were said to be affiliated with the "Parcham" ("Banner"), an amorphous, Moscow-oriented communist political grouping. A few months after the coup, Daoud, who is primarily a nationalist, began quietly to dismiss some of the leftists. Recently he has grown even more distrustful of them, [REDACTED] he is suspicious of the left's ties to the USSR and is uneasy about its relative cohesiveness in a country in which no formal political parties are permitted. A number of leftists remain in influential jobs, but Daoud and other Afghan officials who sense his mood appear intent on further reducing their power.

Daoud's distrust of pro-Soviet domestic elements, together with his belief that the Soviet Union gives ideological indoctrination to Afghan students and military officers trained there, has caused him to become irritated with the Soviets, [REDACTED] He is unlikely, however, to let these irritants damage Kabul's good relations with Moscow, which stem from the Soviet Union's geographical proximity and Afghanistan's long-standing dependence on Soviet military and economic aid. This dependence on Moscow also has kept Daoud from moving more rapidly and harshly against leftists at home. (SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM/NO DISSEM ABROAD/BACKGROUND USE ONLY/CONTROLLED DISSEM)

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